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PP RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #1814/01 3241046  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 201046Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9238  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001814

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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: JSR CALLS MSA "BIGGEST THREAT TO UNAMID"

REF: KHARTOUM 1639

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. On his first official day in the new El Fasher Headquarters, Joint Special Representative (JSR) for the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Rodolphe Adada told Charge Fernandez in a November 14 meeting that the single biggest threat to UNAMID's success was the unresolved Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) issue. UNAMID Acting Force Commander MAJ GEN Karenzi predicted that if the rebels do not get their MSA, "they will cause trouble," which would serve only to "haunt" UNAMID from the outset. Adada described difficult negotiations with the Government of Sudan on concluding UNAMID's Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), but he stopped short of castigating the GoS for any bona fide UNAMID obstruction. Nevertheless, UNAMID staff report that key communications equipment remains held in El Fasher Airport, and the SOFA has yet to be concluded. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) The Charge, accompanied by POL/ECON Counselor and FieldOff, met on November 14 at UNAMID El Fasher Headquarters with JSR Adada, Adada's Advisor Abdurahman Ahmed, Director of Administration Mohamed Yonis, Adada's Special Assistant Rana Taha and Acting FC Karenzi Karake Emmanuel.

"MSA WILL HAUNT UNAMID"

3. (SBU) On his first official day in the new UNAMID El Fasher Headquarters, Joint Special Representative Rodolphe Adada told the Charge in a November 14 meeting that the main threat to UNAMID's success and the biggest problem plaguing North Darfur was the unresolved Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) issue. (Note: Rebels who participate in the Ceasefire Commission receive a generous cash subsidy from AMIS, which will not continue under UNAMID. End note.) Adada described rebel frustration at being paid less than Milobs, a frustration that he said threatened to turn violent amid rumors of troop build-ups near Umm Barru in northwest Darfur. UNAMID Acting Force Commander MAJ GEN Karenzi added that the rebels had approached him aggressively on the issue, demanding an end to diplomatic niceties and insisting on talking to Adada. Karenzi warned that if the rebels do not get their MSA, then "they will cause trouble."

4. (SBU) The Charge acknowledged the persistence of the MSA problem and asked Adada if the UN had considered, in its discussions with the rebels of a way to resolve the problem, making it clear to the rebels that the UN would try to help AMIS raise the money from donors, but that MSA payments were not part of the UNAMID mandate and would end in December. The Charge cited a suggestion in the works from Sweden to provide "in-kind" assistance (e.g., medical) to rebel signatories in lieu of payments. Adada expected that political talks in Sirte would lead to a new Ceasefire Commission mechanism that would deal with the MSA issue, but in the meantime made an appeal for donor assistance to resolve the issue. Charge suggested that AMIS troops be well prepared for trouble once the subsidy is definitively ended.

¶5. (SBU) Privately, the Special Assistant to Deputy JSR Henry Anyidoho reiterated to FieldOff on November 19 that the MSA dilemma would "haunt" UNAMID if left unaddressed. She expressed regret that the issue had become so all-encompassing and credible a threat to mission success that Force Commander GEN Agwai could focus on little else. The Special Assistant noted that the U.S. had not made contributions to the MSA pot and warned that the Sudanese rebels involved would not easily let go of what they considered their right to compensation, but what seems to be an undisguised bribe.

#### SAME OLD GoS TRICKS ON UNAMID IMPLEMENTATION

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¶6. (SBU) JSR Adada relayed preliminary discussions begun on November 13 with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue of releasing telecommunications equipment seized by the National Intelligence and Security Service at El Fasher Airport. Adada noted that he had presented to the MFA "evidence" of this seizure, and the GoS had countered by proposing use of "software" to exchange information to prevent such situations in the future. The Deputy JSR's staffer told FieldOff on November 19 that the VSATs were still held at the airport, which was compounding UNAMID's already significant infrastructure problems.

¶7. (SBU) Adada went on to describe discussions with the GoS Committee for UNAMID implementation on the new SOFA for UNAMID. Adada said the GoS had submitted its own version of the document, which UN lawyers were currently examining, although with the impression that most, if not all, of the GoS proposals would be "unacceptable." Getting the SOFA right was critical to the mission, Adada acknowledged, and DOA Yonis added there would be another meeting with the GoS on November 14 to reconcile differences in interpretations. Charge reminded that creating legal mazes was one of the GoS' strengths in stalling for time, not unlike the stall

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tactics it had been employing over the past year on UNAMID's troop composition. As of November 19, there is still no clarity on the status of the SOFA, which Adada is now handling personally.

¶8. (SBU) Adada did not have all negative words for the GoS on UNAMID implementation, however. He called the GoS' allowing of additional Nigerian and Rwandan battalions and their APCs a "big success," and the Charge agreed that to reap the best results in cooperation with the GoS, pressure must be carefully and strategically applied, and each snag addressed in specific detail.

¶9. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

FERNANDEZ